

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Kay Shutt

BY PAULA BOON

Kay Shutt doesn't mind telling people her age (which is 86), because she doesn't quite believe it herself. "Where did the years go?" she asks.

Shutt is known to many in Huntsville for her long-time contributions to the Huntsville chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society.

Treated for both breast cancer and colon cancer in the 1970s, she knows just how important it is to support those with cancer and help fund research dedicated to fighting the disease.

After joining the cancer society in 1985, Shutt participated in a program for mastectomy patients called Reach and Recovery. She visited women during their hospital stay, providing information and offering the perspective of someone who had gone through the same experience.

Since then she has taken a turn at most of the jobs that need to be done within the cancer society, including acting as president for several years. "I'm slowing down a now, but I do help out a little bit," she says.

She still writes monthly newspaper columns to inform the public of the society's activities, and between preparing for the daffodil sale and

canvassing for the cancer society, this past month has been a busy one.

"People in Huntsville have always been quite generous," she says. "I hope they continue to be, because we need to keep this going."

Shutt has found that cancer touches almost everyone's life at some point. "I don't think you can meet anyone who doesn't know of someone, a friend or someone in their family, who's had it," she says. "It's a vicious disease."

The people who make up the Huntsville branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, Shutt says, are a wonderful group of volunteers.

"We do work very hard, and I think we do a good job," she says. "We help patients tremendously, particularly with transportation, which is free to cancer patients wherever they need to go."

Shutt's life outside of her involvement with the cancer society has been also been very full.

Born in England in 1921, she worked in London as a telephone operator during the second world war and married a Canadian soldier named Donald Shutt in 1944.

Three months after their son Colin was born, they moved to Canada.

"I hate the term 'war bride,'" says Shutt, "but

that's what I am. Thinking back, I must have broken mother's heart taking her only grandchild across the ocean."

She didn't return to England for 15 years. The couple lived in Toronto, where their daughter Dale was born. They had a cottage on Fletcher Lake, 12 miles from Dorset, and used to come into Huntsville to spend the day sometimes.

In 1971, when her husband, who worked at a financial institution, had a chance to transfer, they moved to Huntsville.

A life-long avid reader, Shutt worked at Huntsville Public Library for six years beginning around 1975. "That was when the library was on Main Street. While I worked there it moved to the old LCBO building on the site of the current library," she says.

In her free time, Shutt took many art-related adult education courses, taking a particular liking to porcelain painting and stained glass. She also volunteered at Fairvern throughout the 1970s.

Although she confesses that she has become rather "lazy" of late, her sense of adventure has not diminished. Last September, Shutt took the train across Canada by herself. She explains, "I've always wanted to do that, and I thought,

'If I'm going to do it, I'd better do it now.'"

These days, she is happy to spend several hours each morning lounging with her newspaper and a cup of tea. She and a group of friends meet regularly to have lunch and go on little excursions, and she's also a member of the hospital marathon bridge group.

With the warm weather on its way, Shutt is looking forward to golfing as well.

"I love golf. This will probably be my last year, though," she says. Then she adds with a laugh, "Of course, I keep saying that! It's a wonderful summer pastime."

Thanks to Bobbi Bird for suggesting that Kay Shutt be profiled. If there is someone you'd like to see in this space, please call Paula at 789-5541 or e-mail pboon@metrolandnorthmedia.com.



## LETTER

### Canadian reaction to Tibet shows double standards

It defies the intellect of a simple-minded person, like myself, to understand why Canadians and our government are so excited and making such a fuss about the treatment of Tibetans by the Chinese government.

We have soldiers in Afghanistan who joined the Army of Occupation sent in by our government to appease NATO and the USA on the pretext of bringing democracy and stability to the people of Afghanistan; and because we are told Afghanistan is a threat to the security of our country.

The Canadian army of occupation is, at colossal expense to the Canadian taxpayer, on a misguided and ill-conceived military mission. Our soldiers are killing innocent people and simply contributing to the violence and unrest in a country with totally different social and cultural values to Canada's. Shame on Mr. Harper and his accomplices for dishonouring the image of Canada as a peace-loving, multi-cultural and stable democracy. Our government is no less guilty than the Chinese government of military aggression against and repression of peoples of another sovereign country.

Meanwhile on the streets of our own cities, gun-toting criminals are terrorizing and killing innocent people, while the law enforcement system is unable (or unwilling?) to take a firm hand to restore security and make our country a safer one to live in.

Are we guilty of double standards or does our government have a case of the ostrich syndrome — its head in the sand?

Hugh Reynolds  
Dorset

## Outbreaks can be prevented through routine childhood vaccinations: doctor

BY DR. COLIN LEE

Measles, polio, diphtheria and the mumps are diseases that were once common in Canada but are seldom seen today. Those diseases do still exist, but we are much less vulnerable to contracting them thanks to routine childhood immunization.

Immunization works by introducing a small amount of antigen to create a memory in the body's immune system. The immune system learns to recognize this disease without the person actually becoming ill. Later, if that same immune system comes in contact with the disease, the body is prepared to fight the disease off quickly.

When children are immunized, their bodies make antibodies that fight specific infections. If they are not protected and come in contact with one of these infections, they may get sick and potentially experience complications or even, in rare cases, die.

Immunization offers protection for more than just the individual. Immunization protects

communities by preventing the spread of disease. As more people are immunized, the risk of disease for everyone is reduced.

The challenge is to keep immunization rates high so that we won't have future outbreaks of disease. Whenever immunizations coverage rates drop, the window opens for a resurgence of disease. In 2005, for example, Oxford County in nearby southwestern Ontario experienced an outbreak of rubella (German measles) that resulted in 283 cases of rubella. All but two of the individuals infected had not been immunized. Pregnant women exposed to rubella face an increased risk of having their babies born with congenital rubella syndrome, which can cause problems with their eyes, heart, hearing and neurologic and cognitive development.

In 2000, Ireland saw more than 1,200 cases of measles, compared with only 148 in the year before due to a decline in immunization rates. In the former Soviet Union between 1990 and 1995, approximately 125,000 cases of diphtheria resulting in 4,000 deaths

were due to decreased public access to immunization.

Outbreaks like these are easy to prevent through routine childhood vaccinations. However, immunization isn't just for children. Adults also need to be aware that they require a booster for tetanus and diphtheria every 10 years in order to be protected. An annual influenza vaccine is recommended as well as the pneumococcal vaccine for those over 65 years or with certain high-risk medical conditions. There may also be vaccine recommendations for travel to countries outside of Canada. Remember to speak with your healthcare provider to be sure you are up to date.

For more information and advice on immunizations that protect your children's health call Your Health Connection Monday to Friday at 721-7520 (1-877-721-7520) and speak with a nurse or check the website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

Dr. Colin Lee is an associate medical officer of health.

## Influenza active right now in Muskoka

An increase in influenza cases in recent weeks is a reminder to the public that they can help protect themselves and others by washing their hands often and, when they have influenza-like symptoms, by staying home from work and school and, unless medically necessary, away from long-term care institutions and hospitals.

"Our influenza cases have jumped considerably in the past three weeks, which tells us that we are seeing community-wide influenza activity," says Dr. Charles Gardner, medical officer of health for the health unit. "People need to remember that washing their hands often with warm soapy water, especially after coughing and sneezing and before eating, is the best way to protect themselves from influenza. And if they

do have influenza, they should stay off work or school to prevent sharing their illness with others." Influenza season typically runs from the beginning of December through to the end of April. Simcoe Muskoka has seen more than 170 lab-confirmed cases of influenza this season, including cases in long-term care institutions. As of April 9, there have been 14 confirmed influenza outbreaks, including seven in the past week. There were only four influenza outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka during last year's influenza season. "Because we have seen a recent increase in influenza activity in long-term care institutions, we are asking people who have influenza-like symptoms to also avoid visiting friends and family in those places until they are well," said Gardner. Influenza is a serious res-

piratory illness caused by a virus. Symptoms include cough, fever, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme weakness and fatigue. The very young, the elderly and people with chronic diseases are especially vulnerable to developing serious complications from influenza. Influenza is spread easily from infected people to others by respiratory droplets through coughing, sneezing or talking. Influenza is also spread through direct contact with surfaces or objects that have come into contact with the virus. For more information about influenza call Your Health Connection at 721-7520, or 1-877-721-7520 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. You can also check the health unit website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).



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